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N.B. Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission 2000-01 annual report (02/02/05)

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FREDERICTON (CNB) -- The 2000-01 annual report of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission was released today by Training and Employment Development Minister Norman McFarlane.

"As our annual report demonstrates, the Human Rights Commission continues to provide a vitally important service to New Brunswickers," Commission Chair Patrick Malcolmson said. "I am particularly happy at the large number of complaints that the commission is able to mediate and resolve informally."

In the annual report, commission Director Janet Cullinan noted the commission processed 115 formal and 313 informal complaints in 2000-01. Formal complaints are investigated by the commission, while informal complaints are cases where complainants opt to go directly into the conciliation phase.

Statistics in the report show that over three quarters of the formal complaints were employment-related. Disability discrimination complaints were the most numerous, accounting for 40 per cent of formal complaints. Sex discrimination and sexual harassment complaints amounted to 19 per cent of the formal complaints, while race and colour discrimination complaints represented 13 per cent.

In 2000-01, the commission co-ordinated the consultations that led to New Brunswick being the first province to approve the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women, as well as the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The commission was similarly involved with respect to New Brunswick's approval of the draft protocol to the UN Convention Against Torture. The commission staff also completed reports and consultations relating to other UN and OAS human rights instruments.

During 2000-01, the commission's Web site received 135,000 page requests. The commission's most important educational publication was a 157-page teacher's activity guide for grades 4 to 8 entitled "Learning Together." Workshops and classes were presented to a number of employers, students and teachers..

A significant legal development was a decision by the UN Human Rights Committee dismissing Malcolm Ross' complaint that he had been removed from his teaching position in Moncton due to his anti-Jewish publications. The UN body found that the transfer to a non-teaching position, which had been ordered by a human rights board of inquiry in 1991, did not violate the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Human Rights Commission's annual report is available on its Web site: http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp

The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission administers the provincial Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination and harassment based on religion, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, mental and physical disability, race, colour, national origin, place of origin and ancestry. The act applies to all employers, public services and housing, except those that fall under federal jurisdiction.

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EDITORS NOTE: Printed copies of the 2000-01 annual report are available from Kellie MacNaughton at 506-453-2301. Electronic copies are also available:

in Word: http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/Annual-report-2000-01-New-Brunswick-Human-Rights-Commission.doc

and PDF:

http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/Annual-report-2000-01-New-Brunswick-Human-Rights-Commission.pdf

For more information about the Human Rights Commission and the Human Rights Act, see http://www.gnb.ca/hrc-cdp/e/index.htm.

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